

How to crack PI-WAT: Strategy and Time Management are must, says Akash Verma of Great Lakes Gurgaon

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How to Crack PI WAT - In order to help the candidates who are preparing for Personal Interview (PI) and Written Ability Test (WAT) to get admission in B-schools, Careers360 brings the PI-WAT experience of Akash Verma, a student of Great Lakes Institute of Management, Gurgaon. Akash tells Careers360 that the personal interview was mainly about current affairs, a couple of them related to his academics, and interestingly he was also quizzed on his hobbies. He was taken off-guard when the PI kicked off asking him about a workshop he had mentioned on his application, but totally forgot to brush up on that! However, what started off as a nervous session, ended up well as he managed to keep a smile and remained confident throughout the rest of the interview during PI at [Great Lakes Institute of Management](#).

Let's get a clear picture of his time management strategies, dedicated practice of mock PIs and other practices that must be followed to ace WAT-PI for aspiring candidates.

Careers360: Let's start by getting an insight of the selection procedure at Great Lakes Institute of Management.

Akash: The overall selection process at my B-School was divided into three parts. The first stage was the Application Submission. As selection at Great Lakes is based on overall profile, so the application required extensive details regarding our work experience, academics and extracurricular activities.

The second stage is the WAT. You have to go through a Written Ability Test (WAT) where you have to write a short essay on any one of the three topics given to you.

Then comes the Interview stage. Once you are done with your WAT test, you are called for a face-to-face interview.

Careers360: Please give us an overview of your experience while attending the selection procedure of Great Lakes Institute of Management?

Akash: I had a fantastic experience attending the interview at Great Lakes. My Interview was at Trade Center, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai in the afternoon slot which is 12:30 PM onward. After reaching the Center, we first had a formal introductory session by one senior faculty at Great Lakes followed by a Q&A session with Adcom members. Then, we had our WAT test for which 20 minutes were allotted. Soon after the completion of WAT, the document verification started. While we were having our turns for document verification, the Adcom members simultaneously started calling us for interviews. The overall staff present at the Center were very nice and friendly to interact with. I got a chance to clear my queries regarding the college. My entire process was completed within two hours.

Careers360: Did you find your WAT topic easy? Can you tell us your topic?

Akash: My WAT topic was "Can technology help in preventing Money Laundering?" We were given 20 minutes to write our thoughts on the given topic. I did follow a certain strategy to structure my thoughts. I gave the first 5 minutes for recollecting and organizing my points. I then divided my entire essay body into three parts, namely - Introduction, key issues, recommendation & conclusion. After ensuring that all the important points and headings are highlighted in black and bold, I tried to use real-world examples to express my views.

Overall, I found it easy to write on the given topic because we were given a choice amongst three topics based on current affairs. Not to forget, the interviewer appreciated me for the way I structured my WAT essay!

Careers360: How did you gear up for WAT? Tell us when you began formulating and preparing for PI-WAT rounds?

Akash: For WAT, I did no special preparations apart from reading the newspaper daily. That helped me a lot in keeping myself updated with current affairs. I specifically focused on editorials because one can get very rich content from that section. As for PI, I started my preparations once I got shortlisted, so I had around 10 days to prepare myself for the interview.

Careers360: Do you think that a separate preparation strategy is required for WAT?

Akash: Well, for WAT I believe that a few points should be kept in mind. Reading the newspaper daily is a must to keep abreast of current affairs. Try to develop and enhance your ability to structure your thoughts in an organized and readable manner. Highlighting key points which you want to get noticed by the interviewer is also important as is the ability to manage time.

If you are good with the above points then no separate strategy would be required according to me. Also get some sample essays proofread by a mentor so that he or she may guide you on your progress.

Careers360: Please share the WAT topics which you were asked during the admission rounds last year.

Akash: In one of the WATs, I was given the topic - 'Can technology help in preventing Money Laundering?'. In another one, I was asked to write my views on Demonetization and yet another tested my knowledge of Donald Trump's role.

Careers360: What is it that one can do if s/he does not have any knowledge about a topic during WAT?

Akash: If you are in such a situation where you have no idea about any of the topics given to you, the least you can do is give more time to think about the topic and try to gather some examples which you have come across. Follow the basic rule of writing something in a structured manner as this carries some points as well. Include more examples rather than writing too many technical details which you are unaware of.

Careers360: What are the Do's and Don'ts for WAT? Could you share a few pointers there?

Akash: Certainly. Some of the best practices that need to be kept in mind include following a structural format of Introduction, Body or Key Issues, Conclusion or Recommendations. Try to relate to examples from industry. Make use of a marker or different colour pen to highlight key points while keeping a track of time. Don't forget to use bullet points under some paragraphs for better readability.

As for the don'ts, remember to not waste too much time in thinking and don't start writing in the last 5-10 minutes. Including irrelevant details in your essay is a no-no as you would be grilled on that during your interview. Never overshoot the given word limit.

Careers360: Any special time management skills that would aid aspiring candidates in writing a complete structured WAT?

Akash: Yes, absolutely! In my opinion, you have to divide your time in WAT in a proper manner otherwise you would goof up at the end. For me, the best strategy that works for a test like WAT is devoting the first 5 minutes for thinking and structuring points. I keep 2-4 minutes at the end for proofreading while the remaining time can be utilized for writing. Most importantly, keep an eye on your watch.

Careers360: How was your personal interview experience? How big was the panel and what were your feelings while facing them?

Akash: Overall my interview experience was mixed. I went in the interview room, had a very confident handshake with both the interviewers. Then, I was asked a question which came out of nowhere and that made me a little nervous. Slowly, I recovered from the nervousness and from then on it went on smoothly for me as I regained my confidence as the interview progressed. There were two interviewers on my panel.

Careers360: What were the questions which you found most difficult to answer? How did you manage to answer them?

Akash: I had mentioned about a workshop I had attended during my graduation in [IIT Kanpur](#). That workshop was based on Radio Control Aircraft Design. While preparing

for this interview, it did not occur to me to go through this topic. The very first question that was asked to me during the interview was "How would you design a Drone?". This came unexpectedly and I went blank. But then I tried to manage a smile on my face and crafted an answer on the spot. However, the interviewer did not seem to be impressed with my answer and he just had a smile and went on with other questions.

Careers360: How did you get past the questions you had no idea about? Was the panel rude or were they easy on you?

Akash: According to me, the best way to handle unexpected questions in an interview is to never show that you are nervous even if you actually are. Don't be overconfident as well. Try to keep a smiling face.

If you are very unsure about the answer and cannot build a story around it, don't try to beat around the bush. Be honest and most importantly, maintain eye contact with the interviewers. The panel was pretty easy on me.

Careers360: There must have been some interesting questions too, I'm sure. Please tell us about them and your replies.

Akash: Of course! One of the interviewers asked me to describe a trip I had in recent times as I had mentioned Travelling & Photography as one of my hobbies. I told them about my trip to Tarkarli - a beach on the western coast of Konkan region in Maharashtra. I thought I can use this as an opportunity to showcase my life apart from my work as well as my management skills.

I started off by describing how this idea clicked in and how we made travel & hotel arrangements for the trip, then I described our journey to the destination, all the places we visited there, some unique things about the place and how we managed our

expenses for the entire trip. I wanted to do majors in finance so I thought I could bring in my expense management skills into the limelight here. The interviewers liked the way I answered and appreciated me for that.

Careers360: How did you get yourself ready for PI? What were the PI questions that you searched for to prepare yourself better?

Akash: For PI preparations I worked on keeping myself updated with current affairs. I gave some mock interviews to my mentor at the coaching centre, worked on my mistakes in them, contacted some of the seniors at B-school and asked about their interview experience and tips.

I'd love to share some of the PI questions I prepared answers for. I devoted time to think and prepare for some expected questions about my work profile and the domain I was working in and some fundamental questions from my engineering background. Since I am a Computer science engineer so I worked on questions related to Data structures, Algorithms, coding language etc.

Besides these, I practiced some puzzle based questions commonly asked in interviews. I was ready for questions like - why MBA, why Great Lakes and why I chose a One Year Program.

Careers360: What are the parameters on which the panellists judge the candidates?

Akash: According to me, the panellists look for certain qualities in the interviewee such as confidence, thought process, communication skills, a good understanding of their work, their academics, their reasons for opting for MBA, their eye contact and to the point answers.

Careers360: Were you caught in an embarrassing situation where a question was difficult or impossible to answer for you? How did you react?

Akash: I found only one question to be difficult or it could be called as an unexpected question for me. The same one I mentioned about my workshop where I was caught off-guard by the making of drones. My reaction time was around 20-25 seconds.

The article can be read online [here](#).